

What is claimed is:

1. A false contour correcting apparatus for reducing a false contour in an image based on a digital image signal, the false contour being caused by digital signal processing performed on the digital image signal, said false contour correcting apparatus comprising:

a double bit change detection circuit for detecting a signal portion in the digital image signal, where a change in graduation between two adjacent pixels is twice a unit of graduation level represented by a digital value, and outputting a signal representing results of the detection as a double bit change detection signal; and

a signal correction circuit for correcting the signal portion in the digital image signal to reduce the false contour based on the double bit change detection signal.

2. The false contour correction apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said signal correction circuit corrects the signal portion in the digital image signal into a portion where there exist two one-bit changes each of which is a signal value change corresponding to the unit of graduation level based on the double bit change detection signal.

3. A false contour correcting method for reducing a false contour in an image based on a digital image signal, the false signal being caused by digital signal processing performed on the digital image signal, said false contour correcting method comprising:

a double bit change detecting operation of detecting a signal portion in the digital image signal, where a change in graduation between two adjacent pixels is twice a unit of graduation level represented by a digital value; and

a correcting operation of correcting the signal portion in the digital image signal to reduce the false contour based on said double bit change detecting operation.

4. The false contour correcting method according to claim 3, wherein said correcting operation comprises correcting the signal portion in the digital image signal into a portion where there exists two one-bit changes each of which is a signal value change corresponding to the unit of graduation level.